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Finance Committee Minutes 05-22-2002

ARLINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE
 MINUTES OF MEETING
 7:30 PM Town hall hearing room
 5/22/02

ATTENDEES:

Janowitz*	Feinleib*	Kocur*	O'Neill	Mahoney
DeCoursey*	Connors*	Simmons	Morrisette*	
Tosti*	Foskett*	Deyst*	Ronan*	
Piandes	Franclemont*		Olsen	
DuBois*	Howard*	Fanning*	Tosi*	Kneeland*

* Indicates present

VISITORS: Town Manager Phil Farrington, Town Planner Alan McClennen, Minuteman School Committee member Erin Phelps

REPORT PREPARATION PLAN: The chair provided a budget summary showing a balanced budget that assumes no change from last year in revenues from the state, \$300,000 from the Stabilization Fund and an increased use of free cash. The department budgets as already voted would be fully funded. This approach has been coordinated with the manager, superintendent and selectmen. He stated that if all necessary votes were taken tonight, he would be able to complete the report by Monday for review by the Town Counsel, Moderator, and Manager. It will be mailed to Town Meeting members a week before a proposed resumption of Town Meeting on June 10.

ARTICLE 66 TRANSPORTATION STUDY: McClennen provided final copies of study carried out in FY 02. He had previously made available a draft copy for review. The Transportation Committee requested \$50,000 for follow-up studies. \$25,000 was made available from the sale of deed restriction on the Water Street property by Town Meeting vote under Article 25. VOTED \$25,000 additional funding for a total of \$50,000 to continue the Transportation Study. Unanimous.

TRANSFERS: The Manager requested the following transfers:

\$53,000 Reserve Fund to Public Safety Department to cover an overrun in the dispatcher budget caused by extended sickness on one dispatcher which required overtime.

\$34,600 Reserve Fund to Police Expenses to cover an overrun caused by training 9 new policemen.

\$90,000 to the Fire Department to cover buyouts of 5 retirees. Of this amount, \$30,000 from the Reserve Fund and \$60,000 from the Deferred Pay Raise account.

\$40,582 to the Comptroller to cover the Department Heads retirement buyout. Of this amount, \$18,290 from the Deferred Pay Raise account and \$22,292 from the Reserve Fund.

VOTED to authorize all transfers as requested. Unanimous.

M SCHEDULE RAISES: The Town Manager stated that he considers all the M Schedule raises both below and above the midpoint to be equivalent to step increases. He awarded \$2,000 to each employee over the midpoint unless this amount exceeded max. The result should agree with Janowitz's report. The cost-of-living adjustment will be applied to the present salary before the merit increase.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Chair moved to go into executive session for discussing collective-bargaining strategies, the discussion of which in open session would have a detrimental effect on the Town's bargaining position; subsequently the FinCom reconvened in open session to consider other matters. After seconding, this motion was accepted by a unanimous roll call vote.

ARTICLE 54 MINUTEMAN TECH: DeCoursey reported that the assessment by agreement would be \$2,290,000 and the assessment by ed reform would be \$2,015,000. He proposed appropriating \$2,106,000, which would be the ed-reform assessment plus one-third the difference in the 2 assessments as was done last year. Phelps reported that the number of students from Arlington had increased from 116 to 125. The per pupil costs have been reduced by \$500. She requested FinCom support on two Minuteman efforts. First, to change the education department's ruling that only 10th-grade students and above may transfer to Minuteman under Chapter 74. The school wants to also allow 9th graders to transfer before they become attached to their local school. Second, to endorse the plan to allow 68 9th-grade students from Cambridge to enter this fall without State reimbursement. DeCoursey recommended the FinCom not support legal action against the Board of Education.

VOTED \$2,106,883. Unanimous.

VOTED to support the Cambridge 9th-grade plan. 11-1-2.

VOTED to support efforts to authorize 9th-grade transfers under Chapter 74 short of lawsuits. Unanimous.
DeCoursey to draft letter.

The Finances Subcommittee (Foskett) provided a handout addressing the following budgets.

BUDGET 8 ASSESSOR: VOTED \$267,286, which includes a \$2,000 raise for the Director. Unanimous.

BUDGET 24 INSURANCE: VOTED to increase the budget for indemnity insurance from \$165,000 to \$250,000 because 9/11 losses, insurance industry turmoil, and provider consolidations are driving rates up. Unanimous.

BUDGET 23 Contributory Pensions: VOTED \$4,781,374. Unanimous.

ARTICLE 52 CAPITAL BUDGET: The plans for the Central Station renovation will be funded first. VOTED to fund this article in part with a transfer of \$105,000 from the debt-service reserve and \$300,000 transfer from the Stabilization Fund. Unanimous.

BUDGET 10 TOWN CLERK, BUDGET 6 TREASURER: VOTED to adjust these budgets to provide a \$2,000 raise to each Department Head. 12-0-2

ARTICLE 31 EARLY RETIREMENT: Legislation has not been approved. VOTED no report with comment that should Board of Selectmen plan action in this area, they are requested to consult the Finance Committee. Unanimous.

ARTICLE 39 PENSION ADJUSTMENT: VOTED favorable action with funds from Retirement Plan. Unanimous.

ARTICLE 40 RETIREMENT DEPENDENT ALLOWANCE: VOTED favorable action with funds from Retirement Plan. Unanimous.

ARTICLE 55 COMMITTEES & COMMISSIONS: VOTED \$31,185. Unanimous.

ARTICLE 56 TRANSFER OF FUNDS/CONCOM: This transfer no longer needed. Revolving Fund is sufficient. VOTED no action. Unanimous.

ARTICLE 60 CELEBRATIONS: VOTED \$16,500. Unanimous.

ARTICLE 61 MISCELLANEOUS: VOTED \$143,109. Unanimous.

ARTICLE 64 ATHLETIC FACILITY: Still no plan. VOTED no report. Unanimous.

ARTICLE 69 HEALTH CARE TRUST FUND: VOTED \$175,746. Unanimous.

ARTICLE 71 TRANSFER OF CEMETERY FUNDS: VOTED to transfer \$40,000 (approx) to Public Works and the Capital Budget. Unanimous.

ARTICLE 72 OVERLAY RESERVE: VOTED \$500,000. Unanimous.

ARTICLE 73 FREE CASH: VOTED \$2,767,285, which is \$300,000 more than half the available cash. Unanimous.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS: There may be a Finance Committee meeting June 3 to wrap up the Report. The annual dinner will be on Thursday, June 20, at the Robinson House. Ronan and DuBois will organize.

RESERVE FUND BALANCE: \$211,272-\$53,000-\$34,600-\$30,000-\$22,292=\$71,380

Peter B. Howard, secretary 5/22/02